





THOMAS NAIL 2019-03-01

THREE THESES ON NEOLIBERAL MIGRATION AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

BIOPOLITICS BORDER, MIGRATION, NEOLIBERALISM, REFUGEES, SURPLUS POPULATION

Thesis 1: The first thesis argues that the migrant is foremost a socially constitutive figure. That is, we should not think of the migrant as a derivative or socially exceptional figure who merely travels between preconstituted states. The movement and circulation of migrants has always played an important historical role in the social and kinetic production and reproduction of society itself.

Thesis 2: The second thesis therefore argues that social reproduction itself is a fundamentally kinetic or mobile process. The fact that a historically record number of human beings are now migrating and commuting between countries, cities, rural and urban areas, multiple part time precarious jobs, means that humans are now spending a world historical record amount of unpaid labor-time just moving around. This mobility is itself a form of social reproduction.

Thesis 3: The third thesis is that neoliberalism functions as a migration regime of social reproduction. Under neoliberalism, the burden of social reproduction has been increasingly displaced from the state to the populationtself (health care, child care, transportation, and other traditionally social services). At the same time, workers now have less time than ever before to do this labor because of increasing reproductive mobility regimes (thesis two). This leads then to a massively expanded global market for surplus reproductive laborers who can mow lawns, clean houses, and care for children so first world laborers can commute longer and more frequently. Neoliberalism completes the cycle by providing a new “surplus reproductive labor army” in the form of displaced migrants from the global South.

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